

*A. Coyle*

20 January 1954

From: Executive Officer  
To: All Officers and Chief Petty Officers  
Subj: The Daily Grind in the USS HAVEN (AH-12)

1. One of the peculiarities of the human race is that our habits of thinking and action can be affected or changed outright by the application of mild pressure over a long period, or by the application of that pressure with enormous intensity for a briefer one. Each of us is the product of his environment, his formal and informal education, and his home, social, and professional navy life. Few division officers, CPO's, and leading PO's realize the opportunity our official positions offer us for effecting changes in our men, nor do we recognize and accept the responsibility our positions impose upon us for their welfare. We are all teaching, whether we admit it or not, every moment of our official lives. Those who like us are seeking characteristics to admire and possibly to imitate; those who dislike us seek, with just as much interest, to find characteristics which can be derided and avoided. Then, too, we are constantly introducing new thoughts and habits in the course of the continual direction of our men.

2. My opinion is that these facts should be recognized as a powerful potential influence for the good of all; furthermore, that we should do something about it, for the benefit of the Haven, our men, and ourselves. While it is easy enough to see how the Haven and the men would benefit, you're probably wondering just how that "ourselves" got in there. The answer is simple. First, the fortunes of all of us are inextricably tied to that of the Haven so long as we are members of it. If it succeeds, we do too; if it fails, so do we in our individual naval careers. Second, we all want what we are pleased to call results, the most favorable volume of quality workmanship in our Ship. The most effective channel to such results is through the enthusiastic and competent efforts of our men; and the only way to make the men enthusiastic and competent is to lead and to teach them well.

3. You are an officer, CPO or leading petty officer because from the men's point of view you presumably know more than they do. Therefore, you all have some knowledge and experience which they do not have. That knowledge and experience are what you can pass on to them, what you can teach them. Practical men, experts in their lines, many times lack the ability to teach others what they seem to have acquired naturally and know so well. From the standpoint of the Navy such inability to train subordinates, or a disinterest in that activity, is always undesirable.

4. The truth is that any leader of men teaches his subordinates. If he doesn't take positive action, he is teaching negatively, anyway, and probably to his own ultimate detriment. Teaching sounds like a strange task for us, and perhaps it is. Nevertheless, by virtue of the hours we spend with our men week after week, year in and year out, we are teaching, whether we like it or not. The point is to do something constructive about it, something profitable for our Ship and everyone.

5. These facts are brought to your attention for the benefit of all, including yourself. They present an opportunity for your own personal profit which is seldom appreciated. Your training of your men will enhance their value to the Haven, to the Navy and to you, and will provide a field of mutually profitable relations which will enable you to know your men better and thereby handle them more effectively.

6. The tools available to you for the training of your men, in addition to your greater knowledge and experience, are:

(1) The example you give them by your performance of your own job, the attitude with which you perform it, and your personal conduct inside and out side the Haven.

(2) The morale-building factors which, if correctly evaluated and employed, will create in your men a real desire to do their official jobs and to develop themselves along the lines you may suggest.

(3) The discipline you maintain in your department or division; which will induce the men to obey, as well as restrain them from disobeying, those few dictates we find necessary to make in order to have a well-regulated organization.

7. Regarding your department, if there were one single precept that could be given, it undoubtedly would be that you should conduct yourself as a gentleman and man-a-warman; wherever possible be courteous, pleasant, and sincerely considerate and appreciative of everyone, your subordinates, your equals, and your superiors. No one thinks very much of the man who deals with his superiors in one fashion; his equals, in another; and his subordinates, in still a third. Your men think just as you do; they spit on the man who frowns on his superiors and who then treats his own men badly. If the leader cannot respect himself and his position, he cannot very well expect anyone else to do so.

8. Do your best to be considerate of the other fellow; and insist in your daily activities that your men do the same. Courtesy, consideration, and appreciation beget the same, and usually a lot more in the form of increased cooperation, better work, and improved morale and efficiency.



9. Make it a point to keep your men aware of this fact in everything they do. Like everything else, the momentary response to your first requests for such thinking and action will die a quick and natural death if you don't follow them up. Keep everlastingly at it, day after day, until it has become habit for both you and your men.

10. The atmosphere we want in our ship is one in which competent men will feel a sense of belonging and togetherness, in which those men who do their jobs will have the minimum of concern regarding their personal well-being. We seek to free the men of concern regarding their future security so that their attention, capacities, and abilities may be focused on their work and its accomplishment. The practice of courtesy and consideration for others contributes to this objective.

11. However, I would like to emphasize here two important qualifications: first, we expect our people to do their jobs and in that respect we have no qualms about being considered a tough organization; and, second, our consideration for our men is to be confined to a mature and intelligent practice, and is not to be allowed to deteriorate into childish gold-studded prima-donnas.

12. Now, and throughout the series of these conferences scheduled here in the USS HAVEN (AH-12), you will hear the words, "Courtesy", "Consideration", and "Politeness" repeated endlessly. That is because there is always room for improvement along those lines; even though we should pound the subject to death, we still would find ourselves a long way from perfection, from the amount of courtesy, and consideration any organization can sustain with beneficial results. Courtesy and consideration are recommended here because we wish our men to be as comfortable as we can make them within practical limits, and not because I expect you to operate your division with kid gloves and tap on the wrist.

13. On the contrary, there are occasions when it is imperative that you be tough if you are to gain the results you want. Abruptness, outright rudeness, or even harshness may be the only productive course at such periods, and you should take that course without hesitation whenever you consider it necessary. The men must be controlled and directed, and though you are expected to make a general practice of achieving that end by the most pleasant means, we all appreciate that certain circumstances and certain men require other tactics if they are to be handled successfully.

14. Certain situations, because of time, complication, or the like, demand that you have the unquestioned obedience of your men, and in such situations you should command without hesitation and with the absolute certainty that you will be obeyed. Certain men respond best to almost dictatorial authority and interpret leniency as softness in the leader. If you give the inch, they will take the mile. Such men must be dealt with as firmly, even harshly, as you find necessary to their control.



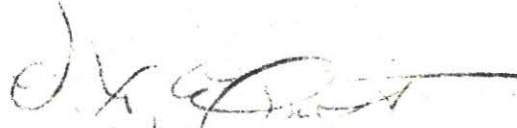
Some men respond favorably to a tongue-lashing; most do not. Some must be mentally whipped before their brains are alert and functioning well; others must be stung with the generally unacceptable barbs of sarcasm before they will perform. Each man is an individual and specific case, and you are expected to familiarize yourself with each man and to employ the appropriate techniques to obtain the best he can give. In general you should be courteous and considerate and invite cooperation because the great majority respond best to such treatment, but where the situation demands, you should employ such methods as you consider essential to the best performance. Some men, like some horses, cannot be ridden with the whip, but others cannot be ridden without it.

15. The way you control your men will establish the working atmosphere of your division, and you are cautioned not to make any man feel that he is not wanted or needed regarding his position in the USS HAVEN without the utmost justification. Your job is to manage his activities as a member of our Ship, and not to toy with his life. Such often used comments as, "If you can't do the job, I'll get someone who can", are stupid and unfair, and accomplish nothing but to cause the man to worry about his standing, and not about the work he is expected to do. You lose rather than gain by such tactics, and you are building up a resentment against yourself that will exact its toll at the earliest opportunity. You may, to use nautical conversation off the record, beat a man's brains out about his work if you are compelled to after all other methods have failed, but you have no right to concern him regarding his future naval career unless it is your considered intention to recommend that he be transferred. No matter what method you may use to govern your men, the continuous presence of justice and fairness must make for a calm atmosphere regarding security.

16. You are THE Haven to your men, and they have every right to expect a square deal from the HAVEN. It's up to you to give it to them; in fact, it is your duty to give it to them. You must get all the facts before you make a decision, you must not play favorites, and you must make a real effort to have the men involved understand the equity of your decision. Your ideas of justice may not be theirs. Every old timer claims that he was fair in dealing with the men, but, nevertheless, apparently many of these old timers didn't meet the requirements of the men.

17. That sense of justice and fairness must be present in everything you do, in your relations with your subordinates, your equals, your superiors, and in all your work with the personnel. No outfit was ever worth a nickel that didn't have a reputation for giving everyone a square deal. It should be very jealously guarded part of our Ship's reputation; and it can be maintained only by constant vigilance on the part of all of you.

That reputation can be ruined as it was made, by what is done every day in a thousand different incidents by many different men. The reputation of the USS HAVEN is simply the sum total of the reputations of the individuals who comprise its leaders. Do your part to guard that reputation, inside and outside the Ship by being scrupulously careful that your decisions and actions are just and fair.



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